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WEDNESDAY
MAY 27, 1953

I straightened up my accounts with the print people, Neuville, this morning. In the course of so doing, I acquired some additional objects such as prints and engravings of Helvetius, whose wife was a great friend of Benjamin Franklin, of Buffon, the naturalist, a rare print of Voltaire, and an excellent one in color of Louis XVI. The Neuville partners are wonderful people to deal with but, like waiters in French restaurants, seem to lose all interest in the matter of payment. Some of the money I paid today has been owing to them for three years.

At lunch time today I went to see the exhibition at the Orangerie, in the Tuileries, of gifts made at various times by Mr. David-Weill to French museums. He died last year. He was an interesting character, born in San Francisco. He became rich through running the Lazard Bank. His personal collection at Neuilly was fine, and he had eclectic tastes. In view of the tremendous number of things he had given to French museums, I thought the exhibit somewhat disappointing as representing the donations of a man who was ordinarily referred to as the Maecenas of French collectors. The last time I had seen David-Weill he had requested me to intercede with Tom Fisher of Chicago to induce him to relinquish his desire to purchase the Delacroix Museum on Place Furstenberg. Fisher kindly consented to do so and I had a letter from him yesterday repeating that he had entirely withdrawn from the matter. He is now in London with his wife, Ruth Page, who is an old friend of mine. She is producing ballets there.

From there I went to look at the French ~~impressionistic pictures on the~~ other side of the Tuileries gardens. They are an amazing lot, especially, it seemed to me, those of Manet, who died in his early fifties.

This afternoon Walter Ritter called on me. He only stayed in the State Department a few weeks as Deputy to Assistant Secretary of State for Public

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Affairs Carl McCardle. Walter is frankly anti-McCarthy. He feels that in a show-down between the President and the Senator, the former would easily win.

Michel Brault (OSS) came to see me. He is head of the Westinghouse Air Brake Company in France and wished to talk to me about the advisability of his taking a tremendous contract under off-shore procurement for the manufacture of 105-millimeter shells. With the small capital of his company, this would be a risky adventure. However, because of the nature of his business and the minor purchases now made by the railroads of his line of products, he is anxious to diversify. My guess is that he will shy away from this affair.

I had a letter from Justin O'Brien today about one of the Sussex agents of the OSS, asking me to try to obtain employment for him.

We went out to dinner tonight at the Talleyrands' house at Saint Brice. Elie finally won his law suit and has become Duc de Talleyrand but did not obtain possession of the wonderful property of Valencay in Touraine. The house at Saint Brice is [redacted] lovely, with a tremendous garden, in the heart of the village. Most of the contents are of museum quality and all the furnishings, especially the prints and drawings, evidence unusually good taste. This occasion was the aftermath of a so-called treasure hunt. Approximately 100 people were there who had earlier in the day gone to the flea market where each had selected some article the cost of which would not exceed 2,000 francs, or roughly five dollars. Prizes were then given to those that seemed to have made the best purchases. We arrived after all this was over but it was quite remarkable how attractive some of the five-dollar bits were. Almost all the guests were French, we saw dozens of [redacted] friends and it was a delightful party.

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